

**SWRMC Celebrates Women's History Month**  
**By Tannyr Denby, Southwest Regional Maintenance Center Public Affairs**

SAN DIEGO -- Southwest Regional Maintenance Center (SWRMC) celebrated women of character, courage, and commitment during their Women's History Month celebration held in the command's engineering training room, March 13.

"Women's History Month gives us an opportunity to highlight some of the strides and improvements women have made in all fields across the board," said SWRMC Commanding Officer Capt. Heidemarie Stefanyshyn-Piper, who kicked off the event. "As a technical organization, I would like to focus on engineering."

Robin P. White, director for Surface Ship Design and Systems Engineering at Naval Sea Systems Command, served as the guest of honor for the event.

"When you look at the national workforce as a whole, only 10 to 15% of engineers are women," said White. "That is very low and you have to ask yourself why that is, because engineering is an exciting field."

White spoke to the women and men of the command on how to talk with children about what it means to be an engineer, especially young women.

"Go out and speak in schools," said White. "I used to talk to third graders in the county I lived in who had a 'sink or float unit' in their science curriculum. I would bring pictures and some videos to engage them and say this is what you're studying and this is what I do and how I do it. It actually has significance."

White believes participating in events like Bring Your Child to Work Day and Career Day can inform girls and boys about all the possibilities in pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering, and math.

As an accomplished professional and mother, White learned that setting priorities in each area was crucial to being successful.

"I've always enjoyed working and being with my kids, but what has been critical is being able to set priorities, both at work and at home," said White. "There were times in my career when I wanted to slow it down and work a more reasonable schedule. When my kids were younger I was able to do that; work hard for eight hours a day but then go home before child care closes," said White.

"It is really helpful to come to terms with how to balance things and not drive yourself crazy trying to be perfect in every area," said White. "If there are hair balls from the dogs running around, I don't let it bother me too much."

White attributes her success in her government career to taking opportunities when they arose, which she encourages others to do, even if it is a collateral duty.

“Sometimes there are opportunities within the organization that are not in your specific job description, but you can get involved in some strategic initiative. You never know where that may lead you,” said White. “You get the opportunity to do things that you may not normally do.”

White suggests that people analyze themselves in order to find what truly makes them happy in their careers.

“One thing that I recommend is that you take the opportunity to do a 360 evaluation on yourself, said White. “Think about what are your strengths, what are your weaknesses and what things do you really want to do to fill in some of those gaps. What things energize you and make you love your day at work and what things will drain you and make you go home tired. That tells you something about yourself.”

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